

THE RUSSIANS OF THE SOVIET FAR EAST

701 end of July, Blyukher still appeared in public and was still in command in the Soviet Far East, but two rather strange things had happened. First, a carefully prepared party conference of the OKDVA, which was scheduled for the beginning of June, was cancelled at the last minute; and secondly, the OKDVA itself was suddenly renamed 'Far Eastern Front' ('Dalnevostochnii Krasnoznamennii Front'). The change occurred between July 5th and 6th, and must have greatly puzzled the Soviet public, which was as familiar with the initials 'OKDVA' as with U.S.S.R., N.K.V.D. and R.S.F.S.R.

The actual disappearance of Blyukher coincides with some major border incidents which the Japanese provoked on Lake Khasan during the last days of July and the beginning of August. The Soviet armed forces remained in control of the situation and killed over 400 Japanese. On the whole the incident on Lake Khasan was rather welcome to the Kremlin, for it gave the government the opportunity to prove that the efficiency of the army was not impaired by the purge. Moreover, the 'defeat of the samurais', as official propaganda styled the historic episode on the Manchurian border, supplied the pretext for a big campaign to strengthen the morale of the Soviet rear. All over the Soviet Union meetings were held in factories, collective farms and offices protesting against the Japanese aggression and sending greetings to the Soviet armed forces who were watching over the security of the Far Eastern borders. None of the resolutions adopted at these meetings contained the slightest reference to the once so popular Marshal Blyukher. The press gave all the credit for the speedy liquidation of the Khasan Lake incident to rank and file soldiers and junior officers, as if no general had been connected with the operation. Only considerably later was the new commander in the Far East mentioned - Grigory Mikhailovich Shtern.¹²

What happened to Blyukher and why it happened was never officially stated, except, perhaps, for some general cryptic remarks made by the Head of the Political Administration of the Red Army, Mekhlis, and by Blyukher's successor. The former told the party conference of the 'First Separate Army',* in September 1938, that the plotters among the party members of the Far Eastern Army had been 'smashed and destroyed'. Shtern was a little more explicit when, in addressing the Eighteenth Party Congress, he referred to 'traitors, spies and monsters' who had infiltrated into responsible positions in the Far Eastern armies.

The disgrace of the Marshal was not a local event of the Soviet Far East, but one of national importance for Soviet Russia. Blyukher was a potential Russian Bonaparte, more dangerous to Stalin than even

* The 'First Separate Army' ('Pervaya Otdelnaya Krasnoznamennaya Armiya') was a new name for the purged OKDVA, the term 'Far Eastern Front' being used for a few weeks only.

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even where the N.K.V.D.-M.V.D. has no direct economic power it is the decisive political force, above all, in border areas like the Maritime Territory of the Soviet Far East. 625
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There are indications, however, that the police ministry has encountered certain difficulties among the Far Eastern Russians during the war and post-war period. Conditions were certainly favourable to a re-emergence of that Far Eastern regionalism which Soviet power has tried so hard to eliminate. The people of Vladivostok, in particular, must have felt once more that the natural destiny of their city was that of a window into the world. They saw the many American lend-lease shipments arriving in their harbour and were bound to draw certain conclusions about the desirability of international trade and Soviet-American co-operation. More than people in other parts of the Soviet Union must the Russian inhabitants of the Pacific coastal areas have resented the policy of rigid isolationism which the Soviet Government has pursued particularly since 1947. 177

This frame of mind of the 'Far Easterners' makes it understandable that the very existence of an American consulate in Vladivostok was a matter of concern to the Soviet Government. The building of the consulate was put under constant supervision and for long periods it was floodlit at night. In 1948, the Soviet Government used a flimsy pretext to demand from the United States that they should withdraw their consular personnel from the Pacific port. The measure had little importance for the Americans as the activities of the four American consular officials were extremely limited, but it had a certain symbolic significance. The closing down of the consulate was a way of telling the people of Vladivostok that their hopes of their city becoming a link between Russia and the West were once more doomed. Some years later the charge was made that the consulate had been the centre of a spy-ring. This accusation was first put forward in the short story *In a Seaside Town* ('V Primorskom Gorode') which the popular Soviet illustrated *Ogonyok* published in 1950. In the daily press the 'plot' was mentioned for the first time on February 8th, 1953, when *Izvestiya* wrote: 'In 1947, the organs of the state security service liquidated a spy-nest organized by the assistant naval attaché at the American consulate general of Vladivostok, Richard'. *Izvestiya* produced no further details nor any evidence to support its disclosure which it simply quoted from a book *The Secret Weapon of the Doomed*. This latter work had come out under the auspices of the Komsomol organization. The absurdity of the Vladivostok spy story does not preclude the possibility that many Russian Far Easterners in the late 'forties' and early 'fifties' were persecuted for pro-Western sentiments just as others had been victimized for alleged pro-Japanese leanings in the late 'thirties.' 648
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The particular sensitiveness which the Soviet authorities have shown 000

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208 The particular sensitiveness which the Soviet authorities have shown with regard to the Far Eastern Russians since the Second World War can also be illustrated by another fact. Soviet jamming of Western broadcasts started in the Far Eastern territories of the Soviet Union several months before it came into operation in other parts of Russia.

II. THE PROBLEM OF COLONIZATION

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

167 The great decisive problem which had confronted both Czarist and Russian authorities in the Far East was that of the colonization of the territory. Under the Czarist régime Russian colonization could be roughly subdivided into three periods. The first ran from the annexation of the Amur and Pacific coastal regions in 1858-60 to 1883, the second from 1883 to about 1900, and the third from 1900 until the First World War.

Until 1883, the only way of reaching the Far East from European Russia was to cross the whole of Siberia on horseback, and this meant two to four years' travel. The formidable journey, under very primitive conditions, resulted in complete physical exhaustion which, in a number of cases, compelled the prospective Amur colonists to abandon their original aim and settle down somewhere in Siberia. Those who eventually reached the end of their journey were appallingly weak from starvation, hardship, and the diseases which they had contracted during the journey. To make things worse there was no proper settlers' organization to help them when they arrived. It is not surprising, therefore, that in such circumstances the colonization of the Russian Far East made little progress, and the yearly average number of newcomers in these parts did not exceed 1,000.

The year 1883 saw the opening of the sea route for the use of prospective settlers. Despite the fact that the sea route reduced the journey to a few weeks only, it never became really popular with Russian and Ukrainian colonists, since travelling by sea was alien to their mentality. Nevertheless, several thousands of would-be settlers let themselves be persuaded to board ships in Odessa for Vladivostok, where they received a much better welcome than those who had arrived earlier by the land route; they were fed and housed, given medical attention and provided with farming equipment.

It was only after 1900, with the opening of direct rail communication between Russia and the Far East, that Russian colonization did enter a more active phase. In the initial stage the Trans-Siberian railway line cut the duration of the journey to approximately thirty days. While the first Russian colonists in the Far East had come chiefly from the overpopulated gubernii (provinces) of Kiev, Chernigov and Poltava, the

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demand, in particular, 'full liquidation' of all shortcomings in Far Eastern agriculture. The Third Five-Year Plan, therefore, aimed at an increase of the agricultural population of the Far East. About 100,000 new collective farmers were to settle down in the Khabarovsk Territory alone. 185
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The outbreak of the war prevented the full implementation of the resettlement plan, but it was, at least, successfully started. Russian peasants went to the Far East mainly from the Provinces of Kursk, Oryol, Voronezh, Ryazan, Stalingrad, Tambov and Penza. Kursk and Oryol seem to have led the migration movement. There was a great deal of propaganda for the resettlement plan and during a certain period almost every single issue of the Moscow newspapers carried a news-item showing how well those farmers had fared who had consented to go to the Far East, and how heartily they had been received there by the old-timers. The big All-Union Agricultural Exhibition which was opened in Moscow on the eve of the Second World War was likewise put into the service of the resettlement campaign. The Far Eastern pavilion of the exhibition illustrated, with the help of statistics and pictures, all the delights of peasant life east of Lake Baikal. In addition, the pavilion served as a convenient place for officially organized meetings at which collective farmers of the Chita Province, and the Khabarovsk and Maritime Territories talked to peasants of European Russia about the advantages of Far Eastern agriculture.³⁶ These propaganda efforts were not in vain. In fact, the resettlement plan for 1940 was already fulfilled by October of that year,³⁷ and numerous peasant settlers also went to the Far East in the first half of 1941, continuing to do so almost until the Hitlerite invasion of the Soviet Union. 167
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Peasant colonization in the Far East was resumed after the war. Its precise extent is not known. Official Soviet sources have shrouded it in mystery and apparently consider it a military secret. In the absence of reliable statistics a rough, and not necessarily accurate, estimate about the increase in the population of the Soviet Far East can only be made by a comparison of the numbers of constituencies which were created for the elections of 1937, 1946 and 1950. There was hardly any change between 1937 and 1946. For the Supreme Soviet elections in 1937 the F.E.T. was subdivided into nine constituencies, each of them representing a theoretical population of 300,000. The total population of the Far East in the narrower sense (including Sakhalin) was, thus, 2,700,000. In 1946 the Khabarovsk and Maritime Territories comprised nine constituencies on the Asiatic mainland, whilst a tenth constituency was formed by Sakhalin and the Kurile archipelago. The total population of the Soviet Far East at the beginning of 1946 could, therefore, hardly have exceeded 2,700,000 on the Asiatic continent or 3,000,000, including the Soviet island possessions in the Pacific. 167
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161 A decree of January 9th, 1950, giving a new list of constituencies for
167 the Supreme Soviet elections established four new constituencies in the Far East. The constituency of Khabarovsk was divided into a town and a country constituency, another new constituency was formed around the Okhotsk Sea and two more constituencies were created on Sakhalin. The total population of the Soviet Far East would accordingly have been, in 1950, in the neighbourhood of 4,200,000. It is, however, unlikely that this figure was really reached. The population of each of the three Sakhalin constituencies, in particular, may be considerably below the 300,000 mark.

III. THE SOVIET FAR EASTERN MYSTIQUE

186 The Soviet régime worked for the strengthening of the Russian Far
● 208 East not only by mobilizing manpower for its colonization, but also by building up a Far Eastern 'mystique', a nationalistic ideology which flattered national pride to the utmost degree. After the end of the Second World War the Soviet Government, with the help of a large army of historians, writers and poets, promoted a cult of Russian heroes of the Pacific. The object of the new propaganda campaign was to show that Russians had played an outstanding part in the discovery of the Pacific and that, by their past records, they were entitled to much more influence in decisions concerning Pacific affairs than the 'imperialist powers' were ready to grant them. The campaign was also intended to prove that Czarist Russia had failed to grasp the opportunities offered to her in the North-West Pacific and that the Soviet Union defended energetically those national Russian interests in the Far East which the old régime had neglected.

RUSSIAN COLUMBUSES

186 To proceed in a strict chronological order the first 'Russian hero of the
208 Pacific' to be mentioned is Semen Dezhnev. Soviet propaganda
159 popularized him particularly in connection with the tercentenary in 1948 of the discovery of the Behring Strait, which separates Asia from America. The Danish explorer, Vitus Behring, after whom the strait is called, may only have rediscovered it one hundred years after Dezhnev had sailed around the 'nose of Asia', the north-eastern tip of Siberia. As late as the nineteenth century, some outstanding Russian scholars still doubted whether Dezhnev could really be credited with this daring feat. Soviet writers, however, are quite positive about Dezhnev's pioneer role. In 1945 the Chief Administration of the Northern Sea Route issued a popular book on Dezhnev, which waived aside all doubts as to Dezhnev's voyage, and described Dezhnev himself as 'a glorious representative of the all-enduring Russian people'.²²

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The next 'Soviet hero' operated on the other side of the Behring Strait, in what, until 1867, was called 'Russian America'. He was the Russian merchant, Grigory Ivanovich Shelikhov, who, in 1784, founded the first permanent Russian settlements in Alaska. Shelikhov's contemporary, the great poet Derzhavin, called him the 'Russian Columbus'. This description, 'Russian Columbus', plays a great part in Soviet propaganda. Because of a feeling of inferiority, *vis-à-vis* the Western World, the Soviet Union has claimed a large number of inventions and geographical discoveries for the Russians, including the discovery of America. Columbus discovered only the American East coast. North-West America was a Russian discovery for which the credit goes in the first place to Shelikhov. It is obvious that the Russians of the Soviet Far East and of Eastern Siberia are most easily attracted by the idea of a 'Russian Columbus'. The Mayor of Irkutsk and the head of the Irkutsk provincial administration have been in the forefront of those who have advocated a systematic publicity campaign for extolling Shelikhov's memory. These two, together with seven other distinguished Soviet citizens, demanded in a letter to the *Moscow Literary Gazette* in October 1950, that Shelikhov should be honoured lavishly on the 155th anniversary of his birthday. In the centre of Irkutsk a Shelikhov monument ought to be erected, they recommended. The Ministry for Cinematography was to produce a film on the 'Russian Columbus', the All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Scientific and Political Knowledge to organize lectures throughout the country about his life and deeds, and the State Publishing House for Geographical Literature was to publish his biography.²⁹ Since then many of these demands have probably been carried out.

Shelikhov's epithet, 'Russian Columbus', has frequently been challenged. Russian historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries considered Shelikhov a braggart who greatly exaggerated his Alaskan exploits, and in particular, the number of Alaskan natives converted to Christianity, so as to get larger subsidies for his trading firm. This poor view of Shelikhov was taken by the pre-revolutionary *Russian Encyclopedia*, and the first edition of the *Soviet Encyclopedia* has not corrected it. According to the latter, Shelikhov was just a 'representative of merchant capitalism' not worthy of major attention. Nevertheless, Shelikhov was a man of vision. He conceived the bold plan of a Russian Empire in the North-West Pacific which would have its granary in California and its naval base in the Hawaiian Islands. Shelikhov also wanted to encourage trade relations with China, Japan and India, and he dreamt of voyages to the Philippines, and even to the North Pole.

Shelikhov's successor, Aleksandr Andreevich Baranov, who started a more systematic exploitation of Russian America by founding the 'Russian-American Company', has also his place in the Soviet pantheon.

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Baranov is venerated as a 'self-sacrificing patriot', and a manual for Soviet teachers gives the following appraisal of him: 'Baranov, this outstanding personality, during twenty-eight years kept the administration of Russian America firmly in his hands. Thanks to his personal courage and keen intelligence he opened up and explored its vast spaces. In a hard struggle with privations, the hostility of militant tribes and the mean intrigues of foreign merchants, he established Russian rule over the huge territories of Alaska and Northern California'.³⁰ Baranov has also become the hero of an historical novel. The author of the novel, Ivan Kratt, described Baranov and his associates as modest and just people, without prejudice against natives, and loved by everybody with the exception of a few villains.³¹ 186 208 159

'RUSSIAN AMERICA'

Among Baranov's collaborators there is one whom the Soviet régime has particularly singled out for posthumous glorification, Ivan Kuskov. Until the beginning of 1948, Kuskov's name was unknown even to many well-educated Russians. The Soviet Government rescued it from oblivion by a propaganda campaign on a large scale, which started in Torma, a small town in the Northern Russian Province of Vologda. The town council of Torma met and decided to erect a monument to Kuskov. The importance of this gesture might have escaped the peoples of the Soviet Union had not the Russian Press explained and advertised it all over the country. Kuskov appeared as the man who, acting under Baranov's general orders, had extended Russian America from Alaska to California. It was he, who, in 1812, had hoisted the Russian flag at the entrance of San Francisco Bay and founded 'Fort Ross', the southernmost Russian-occupied point on the American continent.

Not only the biographies of people like Shelikhov, Baranov and Kuskov have been reinterpreted, but the entire history of 'Russian America'. Alaska is not a conquest of Russian Czarism and imperialism, but belongs to 'democratic Russia', to 'people's Russia'. 'The settlement of Alaska by Russians', said the *Literary Gazette*, 'bore a clearly expressed labouring and democratic character dissimilar to the trade-plundering colonization by the Anglo-Saxons, who recruited their agents from among tramps, adventurers and criminals'.³² The same point is elaborated in greater detail in what is purported to be a popular scientific booklet on the history, geography and economic conditions of Alaska. There, it is said that the colonization of Alaska was progressive because most of the Russian settlers were peasants, eager to shake off the arbitrary rule of the estate owners. Many people went to Alaska because they found the oppressive atmosphere of the Czarist régime unbearable. Others were sent there because of their political con-

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● 208 victions. Not only was the colonization of Alaska itself 'progressive' and 'democratic', the management of the Russian-American Company also was. One of its chief executives, K. F. Ryleev, was executed for his part in the December rising of 1825, and there were other prominent 'Decembrists' among the officials of the Company.³³

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563 Soviet propaganda has tried to show that Baranov and Kuskov conducted a progressive policy towards the natives of North America, totally different from the Anglo-Saxon or Spanish policy towards Red Indians. This is untrue and has been contradicted by Russian sources themselves. A Russian naval officer, who visited Alaska at the time of Russian occupation, has given the following eloquent description of Baranov's policy towards Eskimos and Aleuts: 'Woe to those who resisted him. He destroyed them mercilessly, deported them to uninhabited islands, deprived them of all means of contact with each other, and mixed people of various tribes so that there could be no malicious conspiracy against the Russians. He was feared by the savages, they considered him as the scourge of heaven. Since they had no chance to revolt they were forced to become his slaves and to forget all about their previous freedom'.³⁴ As a matter of fact, the Aleuts revolted against Russian rule, as the Russian historian, Shashkov, pointed out in his book on the Russian-American Company, and these revolts led to the extermination of a large part of 'this restless people'. How many Aleuts have perished altogether in the years of Russian rule it is impossible to say. According to the official data of the Russian-American Company there were 8,405 Aleuts in Alaska in 1824, but only 4,363 were recorded in 1859. It would be true to say, therefore, that Russian colonization of Alaska was, from the humanitarian point of view, by no means better than, say, British colonization of Australia in its initial stage.

797 Nevertheless, Russian policy towards the native peoples of Russian America did have its brighter aspects. Those responsible for it, however, were not Shelikhov, Baranov and the other newly discovered national heroes of Soviet Russia, but people whom the Soviet régime is not very keen on publicizing, the Christian missionaries. It was they who founded the first schools in Alaska, educated a fair number of natives, and even translated religious books into the Aleut language. The most important Russian churchman working in Alaska was Ivan Veniaminov (1797-1879). He was the author of a grammar of the Aleutian language which was published in St. Petersburg in 1846. The 'apostle of Alaska', as the Russian historian, Zernov, calls him, became later, under the name of Innokentii, Metropolitan of Moscow.³⁵

175 The scope of these Russian church activities was, however, very small and one cannot say that the end of Russian rule in Alaska, in 1867, meant in any way a major loss to the native peoples; but of course it was, historically speaking, a great loss for the Russian State. Soviet Russia was

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more conscious of this loss than Czarist Russia had ever been. In Soviet political literature published after the Second World War the abandonment of the Russian outposts in California in the 'forties' and the sale of Alaska to the United States appear not only as regrettable blunders, but almost as acts of treason on the parts of the Czarist Government.

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THE RUSSIAN PACIFIC

Russian traditions in the Pacific, as presented by Soviet propaganda, are by no means confined to Russian rule over Alaska and 'Fort Ross'. Quite a number of Russian naval expeditions took place throughout the nineteenth century in various parts of the Pacific Ocean. The public, and particularly Soviet youth, has been acquainted with them since 1945 in various ways. Stories about these expeditions have been written anew, in the form of historical novels or of straightforward descriptions, with the obvious object of stimulating national pride.

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From this patriotic Soviet Russian literature centring on the Pacific one can learn a great deal - for instance, that the Russians discovered as many as 400 small Pacific islands, more particularly those belonging to the Paumotu Archipelago in the South-East Pacific, and some of the Marshall Islands. All these islands had been named after Russian generals in the war against Napoleon, and other famous Russian historical figures. Some of the Russian names still persist. Thus the, Lisiansky Island, a possession of the U.S.A., east of Midway Island, bears the name of a well-known Russian seafarer, and east of Samoa there still exists a Suvorov Island belonging to Britain. Also, the big island of New Guinea has important Russian associations. Russians are not credited with its discovery, it is true, but it was a Russian scholar to whom was due the first detailed description of the Papuan people. The Russian explorer, Miklukho-Maklay (1846-88), spent some time with the Papuans. The result of his observations was included in his diaries, which were not published until the Soviet régime came to power. As the Russian geographer, L. S. Berg, puts it, Miklukho-Maklay died before he succeeded in writing his fundamental scholarly works, but, even so, he is highly honoured in the Soviet Union. After all, he was the first Russian to demand that Russia should have a colony in the Pacific.³⁶ The Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences has been called after him and a play 'White Friend' has been produced in which he is the central figure. He appears there as the 'champion of black and coloured peoples enslaved by the colonizers of the West'.³⁷

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'NEVELSKOY'S IMMORTAL FEAT'

For Soviet patriotic ideology one historic personality is more important

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186 than all those mentioned so far, Admiral Gennady Ivanovich Nevelskoy
159 (1813-76). The entire modern Russian Far Eastern policy goes back to
208 his geographical discoveries. They resulted in the Russian annexation
of the entire Lower Amur region up to the Ussuri confluence, as well
as in the Russian seizure of Sakhalin. Until Nevelskoy's expedition,
the Amur was not recognized as a 'useful' river and a channel of
Russian expansion, nor was it known that Sakhalin was an island and
not a peninsula. Nevelskoy, who had sailed from Kronstadt across the
Atlantic and the Pacific, on August 13th, 1850, hoisted the Russian flag
at the point of the Amur estuary which later became known as the town
Nikolayevsk Amursky. Hence, the Amur region became the only part of
Russia which was annexed by a naval expedition. Nevelskoy's 'immortal
feat' enabled the Russian Empire to concentrate in its Far Eastern policy
on areas close to the Chinese border, instead of using up its efforts in the
distant Kamchatka or even Alaska. On the one-hundredth anniversary
of Nevelskoy's appearance in the Amur estuary, the Soviet régime ex-
pressed its appreciation of the courageous seafarer in no unmistakable
terms. A monument was erected in his honour in the town of Nikolayevsk
and a number of popular books were published on the occasion. The
Publishing House of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth
League, 'Molodaya Gvardiya', brought out an historical novel largely
dealing with Nevelskoy, and the State Publishing House for Cultural
and Educational Literature produced a biography of the admiral.³⁸

PORT ARTHUR

The gallery of heroes of the Russian Far East would be incomplete with-
out mentioning the defenders of the Russian fortress Port Arthur during
the Russo-Japanese War. When Port Arthur fell, Lenin wrote that the
Russian proletariat had every reason to rejoice at 'progressive and
advanced Asia inflicting an irreparable blow on backward and re-
actionary Europe'. When looking back on the defence and doom of Port
Arthur, Stalin's Russia, however, takes no guidance from Lenin, but
from the son of a Czarist officer, Stepanov, who, in 1905, belonged to
the garrison of the besieged fortress. This man published, in 1944, an
historical novel on Port Arthur which earned highest praise in the most
authoritative Soviet circles. The book, which also served as the basis of
a play, was, in the first place, a tribute to two great Russian patriots,
Admiral Makarov, Commander of the Russian Pacific fleet and General
Kondratenko, the main embodiment of the spirit of resistance in Port
Arthur. Stepanov did not consider that the defence of Russia's naval
base in the Pacific was merely an imperialistic affair. For him there
existed the most intimate link between Port Arthur and the entire
Russian people. This he expressed by letting General Kondratenko

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make the following appeal to his soldiers: 'Behind us has been left but a narrow strip of Russian land with the town of Port Arthur. *This is our Russian town*: for its construction we have spent millions of our national income and invested a great amount of work. You yourselves have worked to build up the fortifications and batteries. And besides, in Port Arthur is our Fleet. We have to defend stubbornly our positions. The whole fatherland is following the course of the war and the defence of Port Arthur with breathless attention. Let us give all our forces, and if necessary, our lives in order to uphold in dignity the glory of the Russian arms in the Far East'. The book from which these lines are quoted was an ideological preparation for the re-establishment, in 1945, of a Russian naval base in Port Arthur, 'the town of Russian glory', as it is usually referred to.

SERGEY LAZO

The Soviet régime itself has not been able to make any substantial addition to the impressive gallery of heroes of the Russian Far East from Dezhnev to Admiral Makarov. Such 'heroes' as there emerged under Soviet rule, Marshal Blyukher in particular, were liquidated by the Cheka-G.P.U.-N.K.V.D. There is only one important exception to this rule the guerilla leader of the Civil War in the Far East - Sergey Lazo. Lazo was an officer of the Czarist army who went over to the revolutionary camp and joined the Bolshevik Party in the middle of 1918. He fought courageously against the White Guards and the Japanese in the Pacific coastal areas. In 1920 the latter burnt him alive in Vladivostok when he was only twenty-eight years old.

The way in which Lazo died predestined him to become not only a hero of the Soviet Far East, but also a symbol of Russian resistance to Japanese militarism and imperialism. Whenever the name of Lazo was mentioned - in newspaper articles and history books, in songs and in plays - it was meant as a challenge to Japan. But as history in the Soviet Union is always rewritten and reinterpreted in accordance with the propaganda interests of the moment, the personality of Lazo has undergone a revaluation. After the Second World War he became an anti-American figure as well as being an anti-Japanese one. According to an up-to-date version of Lazo's biography, the responsibility for his death lay jointly with the Japanese and the Americans. He was killed 'with the knowledge and agreement' of the American interventionists.²⁹ A book which prominently featured Lazo's part in the political and military events that took place in the Russian Far East in 1918, N. Kolbin's *Partisans (Partizany)*, was rewritten with the express purpose of denouncing American intervention. The first edition of the book, which the Far Eastern state publishing house 'Dalgiz' brought out in

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186 1948, had only been anti-Japanese. In response to criticism in the official
159 press the author produced, in 1951, a second edition of the same book
• 208 into which a number of anti-American passages had been inserted.⁴⁰

The interpretation of the personality of Lazo underwent a change in another direction also. Originally, Lazo appeared in Soviet propaganda as an international communist fighting for the victory of the World Revolution in the Far East. As time went on this international aspect was pushed into the background, and Lazo was transformed into a patriotic Russian, although, being a Moldavian of Swiss extraction, he had not a drop of Russian blood in his veins.⁴¹ The favourite quotation which Soviet propagandists of the later period picked out of Lazo's statements reflects indeed a most patriotic frame of mind: 'We shall fight with our lives for the homeland against foreign invaders. For this Russian land on which I am standing now we shall die and shall not give it up to anyone'.⁴² It must be admitted that the Russian patriot, Lazo, appeals much more than the communist guerilla leader. A man like Lazo would have become a national hero anywhere in the world, for a person who is killed by foreign invaders under dramatic circumstances always occupies an honourable place in the history of his nation.

These few examples may suffice to characterize the new Pacific 'mystique' which the Soviet régime has created. The whole Russian people is to be indoctrinated with the new Pacific ideology, but in the first place, this ideology is intended as a moral equipment for the Russian settlers on the Pacific coast. They are to be made more sure of themselves, and more ready to overcome difficulties by instilling into them the proud feeling that they are the successors of Dezhnev and Shelikhov, of Kuskov and Nevelskoy, and also, of course, of Sergey Lazo.

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877 the Far Eastern aborigines are sent to the Pedagogical Institute of
 875 Khabarovsk, where there is a department for the Far Northern nationalities, and a few are even admitted to the Herzen Pedagogical Institute in Leningrad. Courses at the Far Northern Department of that Institute last three years, and the curriculum includes 'Foundations of Marxism-Leninism; the great works of Stalin on questions of linguistics; the history of Russian pre-revolutionary and Soviet literature; folklore, and many other subjects'.²¹ In addition every student has lessons in methods of teaching, in the grammar of his own national language, and in the history and ethnography of the peoples of the North.

Native students are also instilled with a feeling of hatred against the non-communist world. The results of this indoctrination can be gauged from the answers which a Yakut student gave, according to *Pravda*, at his final examinations at the Leningrad Pedagogical Institute. 'The Yakut student, E. Sysosyatin, talked at the examination of the situation of the Eskimos, Aleutians and Red Indians in America. He mentioned many facts which unmasked the American imperialists, and their criminal policy directed towards the total extermination of these peoples. To the horrors of misery, starvation, inhumane privations and persecutions to which these nationalities are subject in America, even greater atrocities have been added during the past few years. As has become known, the American imperialists, preparing bacteriological warfare, tried out the effects of the deadly microbes on the Eskimos. As a result of these cannibalistic experiments many Eskimos in America died of bubonic plague.'²²

Soviet dictatorship indoctrinates all citizens of the U.S.S.R., whether Russians or Uzbeks, Ukrainians or Georgians, Latvians or Chukchi. It gives to all of them a completely distorted picture of the nations outside the communist sphere. This campaign of hatred and distortions, while morally wrong in every single case, is particularly contemptible if directed towards the youth of primitive peoples. By trying to transform young native intellectuals into agitators of the 'cold war', the Soviet régime destroys to a considerable extent the good which it is doing by the spread of culture and knowledge.

COMMUNISTS AND SHAMANS

117 The young natives trained in Nikolayevsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk and
 563 Leningrad are to help the Russian administrators in the fight against 'local nationalism' in all tribal areas of the Soviet Far East. Naturally, in the territories of the small Far Eastern peoples the Soviet régime does not fight 'local nationalism' in the same way as it does in areas where there are more developed nationalities. There are no parties or political groups which the communists have to suppress; there is no feudal-

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Christian faith, acquired Christian ikons, but did not want to part with 661
 their Shamanist idols. The same can be observed among other Far 779
 Eastern and Far Northern aborigines. Many Christian converts wear 797
 crosses around their necks, but, at the same time, have idols made of
 walrus bones and reindeer skin on their belts. Naturally the communists
 have thrown ridicule on this pagan-Christian dualism, which they have
 described as 'Shamanism-Orthodoxy', but it is an unavoidable transitory
 stage in the religious development of any primitive people. Certain
 sections of the northern tribes of Soviet Russia had been sufficiently
 Christianized at the time of the establishment of Soviet power to resent
 the forcible withdrawal of priests, and the removal from forests and ways
 of crosses which, in the popular belief gave protection against 'devils'.
 A protest lodged by a group of natives of the Beryozovo district in
 North-western Siberia was characteristic in this respect. The natives in
 question wrote a letter complaining that the local communist secretary
 did not allow them to have a priest. Their actual words were: We can't
 do without a priest because this is our faith.' ('My ne mozhem bez popa
 potomu chto vera nasha takaya'.) The letter of protest was printed in
 1934 in *Revolutsiya i Natsionalnosti*, the official organ of the Soviet of
 Nationalities as a general illustration of the fact that priests still enjoyed
 confidence in certain parts of the Far North.*

Today most of the Far Eastern tribes are outside the reach of those 661
 reduced activities which are still permitted to the Russian Orthodox 779
 Church in the U.S.S.R. Whilst churches are tolerated in old towns
 where their existence is traditional, it has been the consistent policy of
 the Soviet Government not to allow Christian houses of worship to be
 erected in the so-called 'socialist cities' which are the products of the
 Soviet period. In the Far East this applies to Magadan and Komsomolsk,
 places which among their polyglot population count quite a number of
 detribalized natives. Members of the two larger nationalities of the
 Soviet Far East, Yakuts and Buryat-Mongols, are, as far as they are
 converts to Christianity, in a better position than the members of the
 smaller tribes. There are churches in the capitals of Yakutia and Buryat-
 Mongolia and presumably also in other localities of these Republics.
 These are under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Irkutsk and
 Chita, whose diocese is larger than the whole of Western Europe.

STALIN - THE SUN

Against Shamanism and Christianity the Soviet régime uses one and the 208 ●
 same metaphysical antidote - the Lenin-Stalin cult. In the territories of 773
 the Far Eastern tribes this cult has a particularly colourful variant. It
 takes the form of folk-tales which depict Lenin and Stalin as 'super-

* *Revolutsiya i Natsionalnosti*, Nr 53, July 1934, pp. 51-57.

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208 shamans' fighting and exterminating the 'evil spirits'. Lenin and Stalin
773 appear in these 'folk-tales' as legendary heroes, as eagles liberating the
people from the 'bad black kite' (a Tunguz folk-tale), and, in particular,
as something approaching 'sun-gods'.

208 It is understandable that the idea of the sun must have a powerful
773 appeal for peoples living in Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. Everything
538 associated with the sun is good, wonderful and divine. The Soviet régime
has made ample use of this. The Soviet literary journal *Zvezda* rightly
said that several volumes could be compiled from all the legends,
stories, tales and songs in which Lenin and Stalin are depicted as heroes
who gave to the people of the North the inextinguishable sun.³⁴ Typical
of this 'sun literature' produced for the Far Eastern aborigines is the
Nanai folk-tale – *Sun of the People*; – 'and there came a time when a
hero (who, although living far away from the Nanai people, saw and
knew everything) took the sun into his hands, and turned it in such a
way that its warmest rays shone where it was dark, and where down-
trodden peoples were suffering. And they then knew well-being, warmth
and happiness. The name of the hero was Lenin. When a great disaster
befell the earth – when Lenin died – bad people were pleased. They
thought that the sun would stop shedding its light on the people, but
their glee was shorter than the space of a minute, because the people's
sun was guarded by another hero. He is the nearest friend and companion
of Lenin, and his name is Stalin. Nobody can equal the strength of that
hero. His eyes see everything that goes on on earth. His ears hear every-
thing that people say. His brain knows all that people think. His heart
contains the happiness and the woe of all peoples. The depth of his
thought is as deep as the ocean. His voice is heard by all that inhabit the
earth. Such is the greatest of the very greatest in the whole world. And
he took the sun out of Lenin's hands, and lifted it very high. And since
then happiness shines on earth, because it is impossible for the sun not
to shine.'³⁵

The same motif as in the Nanai tale *The Sun of the People* is to be
found, with slight variations, in the poems and tales produced for the
benefit of the other small ethnic groups of the Far East and Far North.

Something could be said even in favour of the Soviet 'sun' propaganda
in as far as it banned the fear of 'evil spirits'. Unfortunately, the Soviet
régime has replaced the fear of the spirits by the fear of its own power
and the institutions and bogies which it has created. One of them is the
wicked foreigner, always ready to attack the natives with the most
ghastly and devastating weapons.

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FAR EASTERN ABORIGINES AND SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

5

Destiny has placed the Far Eastern natives into politically and strategically important regions, the mouth of the Amur, the Russian islands of the North-west Pacific, and the territory bordering the Behring Strait. Consequently, the nationalities concerned can only too easily be dragged into the struggle of the big powers for the Pacific. In fact, they have already played their modest part in world politics, and may do so in future. The Nanai, Udege and Nivkhi have participated in Russian-Chinese rivalries. The Udege, Nanai and Ainu have stood between the lines in Russian-Japanese conflicts. The Chukchi, Aleuts and Asiatic Eskimos are involved in the American-Russian antagonism. 648

The Soviet régime has always been aware of the special position of the small Far Eastern nationalities, and has framed its propaganda accordingly. It has presented itself to the peoples concerned as their saviour rescuing them from 'Chinese merchant capitalism' or from 'Japanese militarism' or from 'American robbery'. The aim of Soviet 'native policy' in the Far East is thus to make the local nationalities anti-Chinese, anti-Japanese or anti-American, as the case may be, and to instil in them a feeling of gratitude towards Russia and the Russians. 208

Not everything which Russian propagandists tell the natives about other nations is necessarily untrue. It is a fact that Chinese merchants were, for a long time, almost sovereign rulers in the interior of the Russian Pacific province, and exerted a tyrannical overlordship over the aborigines. In some cases the aborigines were reduced to outright serfdom. But even Russian sources have had to admit that the Chinese were interested not merely in profits, but also in spreading their culture. In the absence of any major Russian cultural activities the Chinese ran schools for the aborigines. The latter studied Chinese history, and grew familiar with Chinese institutions. Russia and things Russian were either ignored altogether, or represented in a distorted light.²⁸ Some of the aborigines completely abandoned their mother tongue, and adopted the Chinese language. The Soviet régime brought about a complete change. It ended the economic exploitation of the natives by Chinese merchants and stopped Chinese cultural propaganda. Cultural domination passed into the hands of the Russians. From a Russian nationalist point of view this was undoubtedly a great success, but whether it is preferable for a Far Eastern people to accept Russian or Chinese civilization is a matter of opinion. 177

THE NANAI

The most important nationality which the Soviet régime has claimed to have rescued from the Chinese are the Nanai. They are the largest single 131
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